

# Rescued Foundlings Who Become Good Men and Women

Waifs of Great City Benevolence Snatches From Degradation.

Happy Innocents at the Washington Hospital for Foundlings.

Board of Children's Guardians Vindicates Its Establishment.

To rescue the innocent and helpless from the consequences of sin, not their own; to open the door of hope to the unfortunate; to replace filth with cleanliness and vicious surroundings with an atmosphere that elevates and ennobles; to make environment triumph over heredity—this is the mission to which private benevolence and public spirit direct themselves notably in Washington. To make good men and women of the foundlings—the waifs and strays of a great city—this is the task.

It is a noble ambition and a patriotic work, for, even from the sordid viewpoint of mere dollars and cents, one incontinent criminal transformed will represent a saving to the community much larger in amount than all that has been expended for him, and for the other ninety and nine, who, perhaps, have continued in the evil ways destiny marked out for them. Truth is, however, that a percentage vastly larger grow up to be good citizens, of value to their country and themselves. The failures are in the minority.

In Washington three agencies work together to this goodly end—the Washington Hospital for Foundlings, St. Ann's Orphan Asylum, and the Board of Children's Guardians, the last organized by act of Congress and supported by public funds. The good they accomplish is incalculable, for without their sturdy and unremitting efforts the unfortunates born each day in the District would be left to the care of careless and indifferent relatives or to the casual and sporadic charity of individuals. As things are no infant is so far away that one of these agencies will not reach down sheltering arms and claim the little and helpless one for its own.

## Hospital for Foundlings.

The Hospital for Foundlings occupies a handsome and comfortable building at 1715 Fifteenth Street northwest, the building itself surrounded by extensive lawns, where the children play and frolic in unrestrained glee. Miss E. B. Flynn is in charge as matron and superintendent, and she has under her an earnest and devoted staff of nurses and attendants.

No one witnessing the gambols of this band of happy innocents would connect them for a moment with any thought of misery or misfortune. They are bright and handsome and jolly, as gay a crowd of boys and girls as would be encountered anywhere in a long journey. Laughter is their portion and privilege, and they avail themselves of it with gleeful abandon. Visitors to the institution they are apt to regard as partaking largely of the nature of an elaborate joke—as entertainers provided especially for their benefit, and it would be a much-hardened heart that would fail to fall in with this view of the situation.

Nor does any special awe of Miss Flynn and the other attendants seem to possess them. They are obedient, certainly, well-mannered little ladies and gentlemen, but fear has been banished from their lives; they know neither the word nor its meaning.

Yet think from what an abyss they have been snatched and brought to this haven of rest and peace. They come from every step and grade in the social scale; the high and the low, the rich and the poor, contribute to swell their ranks. Many of them bear in features, build and bearing the marks of the accumulated refinement of many generations; others are just as obviously of parentage less cultured. Some were brought to the institution by persons uncertain as to their ancestry, or at any rate unwilling to reveal it; others were left on the doorstep at night, with only a peal of the bell to announce their arrival and plead for their admittance; some were but a few hours or a few days old, while still others have passed their first year before they are committed to the hospital.

## Shrouded in Mystery.

A rare mystery, some of these cases, for the writer of fiction to seek to unravel. Should he attempt it he would probably find an old saw verified and the plain facts of numberless histories to be stranger than anything his imagination can bring forth. Shame has its place in them, and tragedy, and the taint of unsullied names; perhaps if one could look behind the curtain it would be to see a mother's heart, weeping in secret for the child she cannot claim. Ah, yes, a rare mystery for the writer of fiction.

The institution has been in existence and constant operation more than seventy years, and during that time not one of the hundreds of boys and girls who have passed through its doors have failed to find a happy and comfortable home, with adopted parents whose hearts cried out for a child. The little ones have gone to every part of the country, many of them into homes of wealth and refinement, where they have everything that love can conceive and money buy. Others have gone into humble homes, but always where they are looked after tenderly and carefully.

Detailed facts of these adoptions are kept a careful secret by the officials of the institution. The adopted fathers and mothers are jealous of their secrets and would not have it known whence the children sprang; in many cases, perhaps, the child does not know himself but that he is of the flesh and blood of the loved ones he calls "father" and "mother." In some cases he is a wrong has been righted, and the child



A CASTAWAY. Such as the hospital specially cares for.

HORSE WITH THE VISITORS. Children regard their advent as spectacle for their amusement.

comes at last into his or her rightful heritage; in a distant city the family, thus reunited, takes up life anew and under happier auspices. In all cases supervision of the child and the adopted parents is exercised carefully, so that the abuses, if they occur, may be promptly remedied. In summer the children are taken to the country home of the institution, where for three months and more they play and tumble over grassy fields and know the ruddy health that seems always to be theirs. When they leave the home it is with a supply of vigor and happiness that should last them through the earlier years of their life.

## St. Ann's Orphan Asylum.

At St. Ann's a similar policy of watchfulness and care is followed. In times gone by a basket stood each night at the doorway of the institution, in Washington Circle, and it was not infrequently that the good sisters found a helpless infant in the basket, when they began the daily round of duties in the morning.

Sister Agnes says, however, that this has become a very rare occurrence. Modern agencies of government and police supervision are not conducive to the secrecy that shrouded these midnight visits, and other means have been followed to get foundlings into the in-

stitution. In almost every case the sisters know the history of the child—or at any rate, a history. It is just possible that sometimes the story they are told is apocryphal, but the helpless one is not put away because of suspicions of this kind that may arise.

The sisters do not approve, however, of the policy of adoption, and when the children reach the age of seven years they are turned over to other institutions, the girls to St. Vincent's and the boys to St. Joseph's Asylum, both conducted under the supervision of the Catholic church. In these, it is thought, the children's mental and religious education can be continued and their growth watched over with better results than if they were committed to the care of private families.

## Adoption a Great Risk.

"To confide children of this tender age to adopted parents is to take too great a risk than I care to chance," said Sister Agnes, in discussing the matter the other day. "In the first place, the children themselves may turn out badly, and so destroy the affection that might otherwise be felt for them. In the second place, the adopted parents may suffer a change in circumstances and become unable to care properly for their charges. In either event the effect is bad. Under very special circumstances

we permit the adoption of children from the home, but we must in every case be entirely satisfied that good results will be attained."

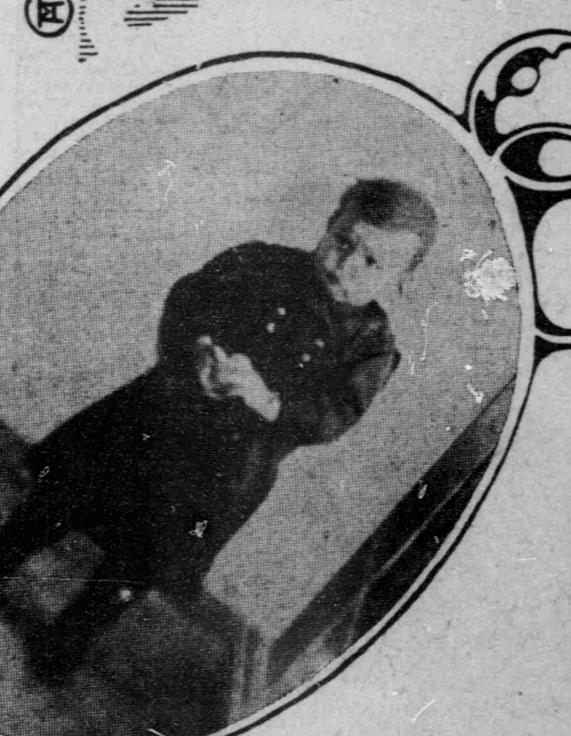
The children of the home take an annual summer outing of more than three months to the country place at Berwyn, Md.

One illustration of the methods of work pursued by the Board of Children's Guardians, under the efficient direction of its agent, John Wesley Douglass, is afforded by an incident of scarce two weeks ago. Then there was left in the vestibule of a house in southwest Washington an infant child, not more than three hours old. The child was in a basket, wrapped in fine linen, and at first glance there seemed to be nothing that would furnish a clue to its identity.

Closer identification, though, revealed the fact that on some of the linen was the mark of the city hospitals, where obviously the child had been born. An investigation was made by Mr. Douglass, and the mother traced to her home in Maryland. She was told she would have to come to Washington and care for her child, and, after some persuasion, she was induced to do so. The baby, which in the meantime had been cared for by the board, was surrendered to her charge.

The charges that come under the care of the board are for the most part the

DESERTED SON OF ACTRESS. A scion of good Washington family



DELICIE MAY (on right) and her sister.



DELICIE MAY (on right) and her sister.

lower strata of society, but some of them are the offspring of persons better known in the community. One little fellow is the child of an actress, a member of a Washington family of good social position and some means. The mother left him in the care of a family in northeast Washington, promising to pay regularly for his board and tendance. This promise, however, she failed to keep, and the child came under the charge of the board. He was a bright little fellow, and before he had been long with the board was adopted by a well-to-do family. The picture of the youngster in knickerbockers and Norfolk jacket shows what he is today.

The mother has made several efforts to recover him, writing last to Mr. Douglass from Australia, but there is no chance for her. "She abandoned the boy when he was helpless," says Mr. Douglass; "surrendering whatever rights she had to him in this way. I think the claim of the board and the adopted parents is superior to hers, and I would not think of interfering in the happy condition of affairs that now exists."

The boy is Creighton B. Titcomb. Another of the little ones that have been cared for by the board, and afterward adopted is Delicie May. She is the child of an unhappy young woman of Washington, whose previous and subsequent record is entirely good. She was nineteen days old, when, on May 11, 1885, she was taken charge of by the board. In November of the following year she was adopted into a home of ease and comfort. No distinction is made between her and her adopted sister, nor is she given occasion to remember that she is not the real child of her kind parents. Her beauty of face is distinctive, and there is every reason to believe she will become in time a happy and gracious wife and mother, with nothing of the dark shadow of her babyhood to cloud her after life.

## The Homes of the Children.

The plan of the board is to place its charges in selected homes until they are adopted. These homes are situated for the most part in the country—in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—and are of a high class, and the character of the family before a child is committed to its care.

In one of these homes is little Abbie, whom Mr. Douglass rescued when she was five years old from a notorious resort on New Jersey Avenue. She has been at this home in Virginia for four years, and if she remembers the squalid circumstances from which she emerged there is no indication of it in her appearance or manner.

Some weeks ago a relative of this family visited the home. She had been there ten days before she learned that Abbie was not the child of her kindly hosts.

The board requires constant reports from each of these homes of the condition and progress of the children, and frequent personal visits are also made there. The child is watched from the time he is placed in the home until he is adopted or indentured, and even after such events the inspection is scarcely less rigid. If the child seems to need discipline he is sent to the Junior Republic, which rarely fails to exercise an excellent effect upon his character.

"The results on the whole have been very gratifying and encouraging," said Mr. Douglass to a representative of The Sunday Times. "There have been failures, as a matter of course, but there have been successes in much larger number. The evil influences of heredity have been triumphed over by environment, and the boys and girls of the slums and tenements, deserted by cruel or unfortunate parents, see opening before them the ways of usefulness and decent citizenship. Personally, I feel that even a small percentage of rescues from lives of crime would make the total outlay, for all purposes of the board, money well spent, that the large majority of these children, if suffered to remain in the environment in which they are found, would become criminals or social parasites there can be little doubt."

"The board has now been in existence for eleven years, and some of its wards have gone out into the world. The ul-



THREE HAPPY LITTLE INNOCENTS. Charges of the Washington Hospital for Foundlings at Play.



A GROUP ON THE LAWN. Happiness is the watchword and misery an unknown quantity.

mate value of the work is just beginning to become apparent—in the after-conduct of these subjects of its ministrations. The record is a good one. The boys are engaging in decent and respectable employment and gaining the good-will of their employers; most are steady and reliable. Some years will have to elapse before definite data of this kind can be obtained in Washington, but I have no doubt that when it is obtained it will vindicate amply the wisdom of Congress in the establishment of the board.

In such manner are the little unfortunates of the District rescued and provided for. With them as its subject philanthropic work means something, for they come under good influences when they are young and before evil habits have had opportunity to fasten permanently upon them. Reformation, as to them, is not a forlorn hope, but the strongest of probabilities; but they

become of value to the state, instead of a charge upon its charity. There are scoffers who deride these efforts to do good, but their clamor would be stifled if they could come upon such a scene as is presented almost every day upon the lawns of the Washington Society for Foundlings, and watch these light-hearted little ones at their games. The children in the scoffer's own home are not handsomer or happier, and, though good children have become bad men and had children good ones, it is at least as safe and reasonable to prophesy good of these as of any one seen on the streets.

The happy childhood of which an effort has been made to rob them is being restored—whatever fate may hold, it cannot take away this sweetest of all sweet memories; these children will have it to keep and cherish throughout their lives. Surely it should be an anchor to windward in itself, capable of keeping its possessors in the ways of right and truth.

## A TEN-MINUTE CORNER OF WORTH-WHILE VERSE.

### WASHINGTON.

KING of hearts; 'tis greater than King of millions bound by fear, Sovereign thus, an Arthur wise Alfred great, your only Peer. King of Light and King of Hope To the people of our land: Glorious in the night of deeds Treasured in the tales of man. Prophet of the future good As the after years have proved That the force of Right and Truth Have the rocks of Evil moved. Prophet not in words alone But in burning deeds that wrought, On the field of Liberty Ever the recompense we sought. Soldier in the cause of right Wielding sword with giant might, Giant of the ages old, Victor in glad freedom's fight. In the camp at Valley Forge, On the ice-bound Delaware; Still the noble name of "Brave" As a soldier do you wear. Statesman, ruling thousand minds Mad with victory's mellow wine, Swaying all with Master will Guiding all with wisdom fine, And when friend half turning foe Seeks to flush our land with war With a smile and healing oil Closing newly opened sore. Father of our Commonwealth Sage from some far other shore, Your example proving thought Be our guidance more and more. King of us and King of Self Prophet of the nation's weal, Statesman, soldier, hero grand Let Old Time your glory seal. —Ellislahy Elliott Poe.

### BLESSED BY A SMILE.

Because she smiled he went away Brave hearted to his work that day: His petty cares were all forgot, He hurried on with one glad thought, His task became joy-giving play. He did not know the sky was gray, To him the world was bright and gay; By splendid hopes his breast was sought— Because she smiled. She smiled as any woman may While letting fancy freely stray: She smiled at him, yet saw him not, And lo! a miracle was wrought— A man was made from hopeless clay— Because she smiled.

### ETERNAL.

[Written for The American.] I asked the seas that grandly roll Their emerald waves from pole to pole If far beyond their crash and roar There is a land of "Evermore!" I asked the storm-winds rushing by If they could tell me how or why We came upon this earthly sod And quickly go beneath the cloud. I asked the blushing rose in May, That lives and dies within a day, The secret of its sweet perfume And why it withers in its bloom. I asked the ages moving on To tell me of the ages gone, And what became of those who fled To mingle with the myriad dead. The seas and winds rose and age That rush and vanish from the stage— Unanimously then replied: "We always lived and never died!" JOHN A. JOYCE. Washington, D. C., February 20, 1904.

### ALABAMA.

"Show me," the weary traveler sighed, "A place where I may rest, Nor ever wish to journey on And leave a spot so blest." An aged man at once arose And took him by the hand, And led him on until at last They came to Dixie's land. They halted where the roses bloomed, The cotton spread its snow, The blighting frost forgot to come, The winter winds to blow, Here let me live and die content, And never, never roam. But tell me, pray, what name it bears, Your garden rich and great? "This," proudly said the ancient man, "Is Alabama State." —Minnie Irving in Leslie's Weekly.